

What is claimed is:

1. A substantially purified polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1 and fragments thereof.
- 5 2. A substantially purified variant having at least 90% amino acid sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of claim 1.
- 10 3. An isolated and purified polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1.
- 15 4. An isolated and purified polynucleotide variant having at least 70% polynucleotide sequence identity to the polynucleotide of claim 3.
5. An isolated and purified polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent conditions to the polynucleotide of claim 3.
- 15 6. An isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide of claim 3.
- 20 7. A method for detecting a polynucleotide, the method comprising the steps of:
 - (a) hybridizing the polynucleotide of claim 6 to at least one nucleic acid in a sample, thereby forming a hybridization complex; and
 - (b) detecting the hybridization complex, wherein the presence of the hybridization complex correlates with the presence of the polynucleotide in the sample.
- 25 8. The method of claim 7 further comprising amplifying the polynucleotide prior to hybridization.
9. An isolated and purified polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2 and fragments thereof.
- 30 10. An isolated and purified polynucleotide variant having at least 70% polynucleotide sequence identity to the polynucleotide of claim 9.

11. An isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide of claim 9.
12. An expression vector comprising at least a fragment of the polynucleotide of claim 3.
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13. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 12.
14. A method for producing a polypeptide, the method comprising the steps of:
 - a) culturing the host cell of claim 13 under conditions suitable for the expression of the polypeptide; and
 - b) recovering the polypeptide from the host cell culture.
15. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the polypeptide of claim 1 in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier.
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16. A purified antibody which specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.
17. A purified agonist of the polypeptide of claim 1.
- 20 18. A purified antagonist of the polypeptide of claim 1.
19. A method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of MHCH, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition of claim 15.
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20. A method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of MHCH, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of the antagonist of claim 18.

Add A17